United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": review of gender mainstreaming in entities of the United Nations system

Statement submitted by Elizabeth Seton Federation, Christian Children's Fund, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, Grail, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Mercy Corps International, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22209 (E) 090205

Women and access to water

Introduction

Women and girl-children, particularly those living in developing countries, are often prevented from extracting themselves from poverty by means of education and gainful employment because of the lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

We affirm and support the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action while bearing in mind that the objectives are not yet attained. We urge full government commitment to implementation to attain these goals:

1. "Ensure the availability of universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation and put in place effective public distribution systems as soon as possible." (Strategic Objective C.1, Women and Health (x)

2. "Ensure that clean water is available and accessible to all by the year 2000 and that the environmental protection and conservation plans are designed and implemented to restore polluted water systems and rebuild damaged watersheds."(Strategic Objective K.2, Actions to Be Taken (l)

3. "Support development of women's equal access to housing infrastructure, safe water and sustainable and affordable energy technologies, such as wind, solar, biomass and other renewable resources, through participatory needs assessments, energy planning and policy formation at the local and national levels." (Strategic Objective K.2, Actions to Be Taken (k)

We recall the Millennium Development Goal (September, 2000) to halve the proportion of people unable to access affordable, safe drinking water by 2015.

Facts to Consider:

A large majority of the world's one billion persons living in "unacceptable conditions" are women. Women and girl-children in developing countries are frequently marginalized due to cultural discrimination, poverty, lack of education, lack of proper nutrition and health and the remoteness of the areas in which they live. In most cultures women and girl-children are responsible for providing water for their "household." Water is used in the home in a wide variety of time consuming tasks, including cooking, preserving food, bathing, child care, cleaning, maintenance of health and hygiene, food production, care of livestock. Due to their innate wisdom and drive to first take care of basic needs, women will not seek education and/or gainful employment if there is not access to sufficient safe water for their families.

Women conduct 80% of water-related work in the world. In many areas, they walk long distances (sometimes 4 to 5 hours daily), wait long hours at public taps, carry health-threatening, heavy, water pots, and often are subjected to the dangers of physical and sexual violence while outside of their own neighbourhood. Yet, these same women are excluded from water-related decision-making and from resource distribution.

Women are most often responsible for domestic and community water management in developing societies, being in charge of determining sources, quantity and hygienic quality. Often they travel great distances in search of water, which limits their time for other activities, including growing and preparing food and income-generating work. On average, women and children travel 10-15 kilometres, spending 8 or more hours per day collecting water and carrying up to 20 kilos or 15 litres per trip. It has been calculated that in Africa alone, women collectively walk the equivalent distance of 16 times to the moon and back per day gathering water for families. The economic value of this unpaid

contribution is enormous. In India it is estimated that women fetching water spend 150 million work days per year, equivalent to a national loss of income of 10 billion Rupees. (http://www.arts.mcgill.ca.152-49b/h2o/water/gwater.wfacts.htm and United Nations Development Fund for Women)

It is well known that water scarcity and unfair water distribution and control breed both civil and international conflict. As victims of violence and forced migration, women and children are the first and foremost ones to suffer from war.

Furthermore, the countries in which poor women live are among the poorest and most underdeveloped in the world. These same countries are often buried in debt, affected negatively by trade agreements, have not received sufficient and promised foreign aid and suffer many internal shortcomings that have prevented their economic growth and sustainable development. Unjust structural adjustment programs, ODA conditionalities and unfair trade agreements pressure undeveloped countries to privatize public services in ways that do not benefit the poor, limit the exercise of national sovereignty, and reduce the democratic involvement of citizens in their own water management.

Private corporation control of water services has often resulted in high prices, reduced water quality, health hazards, and even water cut-offs, as seen in areas of Bolivia, United Republic of Tanzania, Philippines, Uruguay, Peru, India, Mauritius, South Africa, and several regions of Southeast Asia. Water, a human right, must not be treated as a commodity sold to the highest bidder.

Some Positive Initiatives:

- Government organizations, civil society, public institutions, private companies and multilateral development agencies have formed partnerships in several world regions to involve all stakeholders in the discussion and formation of water policies that will be more just, and inclusive, especially of women and the poor who lack access. Some of these partnerships include: The Global Water Partnership (GWP), Global WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, IRC International Water and Sanitation Center), New Partnership for Africa Development (NPAD), Arab Water Council (AWC), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

- In India, Walking for Water, a convening of village women from many states, organized women into water user groups, transforming them into village leaders and economically productive members of the community. This event was planned by the Self-Employed Women's Association.

Water Voices Documentary Series, ADB, Manila, Philippines

- The Country Strategy and Program (CSP 2005-2009) adopted in October 2004 by the Asian Development Bank will assist the government of Nepal to promote a greater balance between different regions of the country and improve access of the poor to basic services and opportunities for advancement. It will also address the needs of the most disadvantaged groups such as women.

Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines

- The Kenya Country Water Partnership, launched in November 2003 seeks to ensure broad and consistent participation by "water actors in water issues." Plans to incorporate "water wisdom" from good practices within indigenous communities and other stakeholders will extend participation beyond the government agencies, which, to date, have been the only voices at the table.

Global Water Partnership, www.gwpforum.org

Recommendations

That there are 1.1 billion people (one-sixth of the world's population) who lack access to safe drinking water and 2.4 billion who lack access to basic sanitation is cause for rallying the global community to swift action on behalf of the common good and basic need of these peoples.

Therefore, we urge the reaffirmation and respect for water as a human right and the recognition that national governments are ultimately responsible for the protection of this right for all citizens, but particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable women and children.

Local governments are best in the position to monitor, protect and manage water resources. But central governments must provide protective regulations, finances, technical expertise and training. Where it is absolutely necessary to involve the private sector in water delivery, agreements must be strictly limited, controlled, monitored, and evaluated by government, with local input and with full insurance that water remains publicly owned.

Women and girl-children must be included at every level, local, national, and corporate, as equal participants in all water-management training and policy-making so that water policies and programs are gender sensitive. Training at the local level in leadership, organization, hygiene and other issues regarding preserving the safety of water supplies should be a priority when bringing water delivery systems to the people.

Developing countries that have yet to address the need for access to safe water and sanitation are urged to do so for the benefit of the common good of all their people.

Since water sources and flow are not limited by national boundaries, we urge that an international task force be established to study and make recommendations for international, gender-sensitive, water-rights management of shared water courses.

We are heartened and add our encouragement to those governments supporting total debt cancellation for the poorest nations. For the most part, poor countries have been paralyzed by debt service payments and rendered unable to do little, if any, development infrastructure construction for the systems needed by their own people. We urge G8 nations and international financial institutions to implement a fair and democratic debt cancellation process as quickly as possible.

We encourage networks among governments, international agencies and water providers so that best practices and successful models may be shared, pitfalls avoided, and the common good be served with justice and quality.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Associated Country Women of the World, Centre for Women, the Earth, the Divine, European Union of Women, Hadassah — Women's Zionist Organization of America, International Alliance of Women, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of University Women, International Inner Wheel, National Council of German Women's Organizations, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia of Women's Association of Thailand, Salvation Army, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Socialist International Women, Society for International Development, Soroptimist International, Third World Movement against the Exploitation of Women, Women's International Zionist Organization, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22215 (E) 180205

Statement

We, the undersigned international and national non-governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, present to the 49th session of CSW the following statement for information and consideration.

We take note of the fact that in the UN Platform for Action, Beijing 1995 called on governments to take action to "enact and enforce legislation to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work and work of equal value". However, we deplore the fact that little progress has been made since then.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 emphasizes the right of women "to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work".

We recall Goals 1 and 3 of the UN Millennium Development Goals of 2000 as being to "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger" and "promote gender equality and empower women", and note with great concern that gender disparities persist because many social and legal institutions still do not guarantee women's equality in basic human rights, in access to, or control of land and other resources, in employment and earnings as well as in social and political participation.

In spite of women's full participation in economic life and the labour force, women still earn less than men for work of equal value. The difference in earnings has serious consequences not only for the financial situation of women throughout their lives but also for their families and for society. The lack of a legal framework for the implementation of women's human rights has a strong impact on the labour market, social security and the workplace.

We also draw special attention to the value of the unpaid work women do in family and society, which is an important contribution to economy.

We therefore wish to draw the attention of UN Member States to the need for:

- the full implementation of women's right to equal remuneration, including benefits and social security; labour laws and pay agreements between trade unions and employer's associations must guarantee equal payment for work of equal value;

- the establishment of ombudswomen and other institutional mechanisms to assist women in accessing higher-level posts and in pursuing career opportunities and possibilities;

- creating a favourable environment for women entrepreneurs, especially those starting small-scale businesses;

- progress towards gender balance in the evaluation and allocation of development cooperation projects and programmes, and the involvement of women in NGOs, thus using their expertise;

- a comprehensive approach to reduce poverty among women and to elaborate special strategies at micro and macroeconomic levels to promote sustainable development;

- prosecuting economic and financial crimes, especially corruption, as they affect women specifically;

- empowering women through education and vocational training, and facilitating women's access to microcredit and other financial means as well as to supporting women's income-generating activities.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
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Statement by Associated Country Women of the World, Centre for Women, the Earth, the Divine, European Union of Women, Hadassah — Women's Zionist Organization of America, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of University Women, International Inner Wheel, National Council of German Women's Organizations, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia of Women's Association of Thailand, Salvation Army, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Socialist International Women, Society for International Development, Soroptimist International, Third World Movement against the Exploitation of Women, Women's International Zionist Organization, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22221 (E) 220205

Statement

We, the undersigned international and national non-governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, present to the 49th session of CSW the following statement for information and consideration.

We welcome the entering into force of the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime on 29 September 2003 and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, on 25 December 2003 and express our appreciation to those governments that have already signed and/or ratified these legally binding instruments.

We are deeply concerned about the atrocious practice of selling and buying human beings as objects and thus depriving them of their basic human rights. We are alarmed by the ongoing violent exploitation of women by transnational organised criminal groups that – with little risk – draw enormous profit from this crime.

We therefore appeal to governments

- to ratify and implement effectively the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and in particular the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking against Persons, especially Women and Children;
- to strengthen national, bilateral, regional and international multidisciplinary comprehensive cooperation at all necessary levels to combat trafficking in persons, the slavery of the 21st century, and tackle the root causes of this crime;
- to eliminate discriminatory legislation and gender-based customs and practices, which perpetuate the exploitation of women, their vulnerability for being trafficked and the use of violence against them;
- to place human rights at the core of anti-trafficking strategies and take a victim-centred approach;
- to initiate awareness-raising campaigns on the possible risks of trafficking in countries of origin, transit and destination by means of, inter alia, TV spots, leaflets, special teacher training etc;
- to train in particular personnel of embassies and consulates, sensitizing them to possible situations of trafficking in persons and addressing this problem adequately when issuing visas;
- to start awareness-raising campaigns in countries of destination to discourage the demand by men which leads to sexual exploitation of women and to promote changes in men's attitudes and behaviour;
- to include programmes and manuals on anti-trafficking policies in the regular training of law enforcement officers in order to prevent and detect cases of trafficking, to carry out effective investigation and improve the proper treatment of victims of trafficking by respecting internationally recognised human rights standards;
- to provide continuous training for prosecutors, judges and criminal justice personnel on the complex crime of trafficking in persons, as well as on the rights of the victims of trafficking;

- to support effective and speedy cooperation between police, prosecutors, border control, immigration and judicial authorities, social and public health workers and relevant NGOs, making use of the latter's expertise;
- to review current laws, administrative controls and conditions relating to the licensing and operation of businesses that may serve as covers for trafficking, such as marriage bureaus, employment agencies, hotels and escort services;
- to create victim and witness protection programmes on national and regional levels;
- to establish an international fund for supporting victims of transnational organised crime with specific projects for women victims of trafficking, using the confiscated proceeds of crime for that purpose.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation

Statement submitted by Armenian International Women's Association, Coalition against Trafficking in Women, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Congregations of St. Joseph, Conseil Européen des Fédérations WIZO, Coordination française du lobby européen des femmes, Dominican Leadership Conference, Elizabeth Seton Federation, Franciscans International, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, Perhaps Kids Meeting Kids Can Make a Difference, Mercy Corps International, Mouvement pour l'abolition de la prostitution et de la pornographie et de toutes formes de violences sexuelles et discrimination sexistes, Pax Christi International, Pax Romana, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Soroptimist International, VIVAT International, World ORT Union, World Federation of the Ukrainian Women's Organizations and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22227 (E) 220205

Statement

Introduction:

We, international NGOs committed through direct service and advocacy to the human rights and empowerment of women, welcome this opportunity to review national implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century." Based on our collective experience working for and with women, we review effective ways to confront the specific challenges of prostitution, trafficking, and other forms of violence against women. We provide recommendations for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.

Overview:

In the 30 years since the 1st conference on women in Mexico City, we have witnessed the framing of a global agenda for women. This process culminated with the consensus of 189 countries on 12 critical areas of concern at the 4th Women's World Conference in Beijing. Additionally, many events, Commissions, and Conferences of the United Nations, including the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Monterey Consensus, the Millennium Development Declaration and Goals, have confirmed that gender equality and the dignity of women and girls are issues central to the global agenda of human rights, security, and human development.

Nevertheless, we have attained neither the implementation of women's human rights nor equality between women and men. Women continue to be excluded in extreme and significant ways from basic rights and societal benefits. Women are prohibited from essential forms of societal participation while they are the most vulnerable to social stress, deprivation, poverty and violence. Women and girls continue to be the objects of male violence in the home, in society and in conditions of military conflict.

We know, from our own experience in the fields of human services, law, education, advocacy, research and academia, as well as from the welcome Report of the Secretary-General to the 59th Session of the General Assembly (A/59/185) that trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation continues to escalate, requires specific attention, and is grounded in complex systems that present major challenges to our commitments to end gender violence and promote equality of women.

Root Factors Related to Prostitution, Trafficking, and Other Forms of Violence Against Women:

From our work in all parts of the world, we know that trafficking and prostitution are particularly egregious forms of violence against women requiring systemic analysis and structural change. To adequately meet the goals of gender equality, these structures must be addressed.

1. Prostitution, trafficking and other forms of violence against women are based in sociocultural perceptions and attitudes about the relationships between men and women:

- Whenever legal, religious, economic and political systems are patriarchal (i.e. favor men over women), women's rights and human dignity are compromised. A woman's value is less than that of a man and her inferiority is embedded in societal structures. The attitudinal systems that endorse such unequal structures create an environment that permits abusive behavior wherein a woman or girl can be beaten, used for sexual gratification, or used for cheap labor. These practices are enshrined in laws, customs and traditional practices where the woman or girl often becomes the property of a

male relative and she has virtually no autonomy as a person. Her dignity is dependent on a male member of the group.

- NGO reports to CEDAW have cited numerous examples of girls and women who have been sold to pay family debts or to supply money for a brother's dowry. Women's and girls' bodies have become objects and commodities, underpinning the gender violence of prostitution and trafficking of women and girls.

2. Prostitution, Trafficking and other forms of violence against women are rooted in economic systems and structures:

- While the poverty of individual women is often noted as a root cause of prostitution and trafficking, it must also be recognized that economic globalization has had differential impacts on women and men, which disadvantage women and increase the structural feminization of poverty. "Eradication of poverty" in general is not adequate to deal with the systemic nature of women's poverty, since women will still be the last to benefit from grass-roots economic progress. Women are not only denied access to mainstream economic structures (including monetary access, well paying jobs, social securities and other benefits of formal economic systems), but they are often unable to eat, find shelter, or finance an education. Therefore women and girls are systematically vulnerable to sexual exploitation and violence.

  Additionally, economic development patterns that encourage migration (domestic and international), discourage sustainability, and disadvantage local economies, lead to even greater incidences of women's exploitation.

3. Prostitution, Trafficking, and other forms of violence against women are fostered in political systems that exclude women and do not evaluate gender outcomes.

- The exclusion of women from all levels of societal decision-making is linked to their disempowerment. Without participation and representation, women lack voice in setting standards of human rights, in forming policies of protection, in guaranteeing access to education, and in ensuring a right to decent employment.

- In addition, our experience underlines the link between militarism and the frequency of prostitution, trafficking, and other forms of violence against women. We sadly note how strongly military complexes dominate our world. Military bases continue to be symbols and realities of unequal and exploitative relationships between occupiers and occupied, often coupled with weak or corrupt law enforcement mechanisms. Domestic and international conflicts have taken advantage of women's unequal position and use violence and exploitation as common forms of military tactic and strategy. Likewise, civil and military conflicts provide easy entry for traffickers, pimps and other perpetrators of sexual slavery who feed on the male demand for the prostitution of sex, exploiting local women, breeding transnational crime and providing a lucrative trade in human persons.

In sum, the widespread prostitution, trafficking and other forms of violence against women that mark women's experience today, mutually reinforce and are not separate from the existing attitudinal, economic and political prejudices that denigrate the personhood and dignity of woman. To work against trafficking without simultaneous work to end the prostitution of women is ineffective and contradictory because it fails to understand the nature of systemic oppression of women. NGOs know from experience that many countries that decry violence against women do not implement laws against trafficking and they tolerate and even promote the prostitution of women. If prostitution remains legal and/or accepted, trafficking has been shown to thrive because these countries serve as magnets for traffickers, pimps and other criminals.

Recommendations to Governments:

We urge policy and action in the following areas:

1. Adopt and actively enforce anti-trafficking legislation using the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others and the recent UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. (see Report of the Secretary General, Trafficking in Women and Girls, 28 July 2004 A/59/185, para #6).

2. Sign and enforce the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

3. Include in States-parties' mandated reports to the CEDAW, relative to article 6 of this convention, an evaluation of the legal status of the prostitution of women, including efforts to prosecute perpetrators, decriminalize women in prostitution, and penalize the demand.

4. Articulate a coherent national policy using international instruments in favor of the dignity of women and girls that explicitly denounces prostitution as a violation of the human rights of women and rejects its legalization.

5. Establish preventive policy measures in national law that address the root causes of trafficking and prostitution, including economic structures, systems of male dominance, and social tolerance for violence against women.

And, finally

6. Explicitly define the role of the newly appointed Special Rapporteur on Trafficking to include the issue of prostitution in her mandate, in accord with the 1949 Convention "that prostitution is incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person, and endangers the welfare of the individual, the family and the community…"

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": review of gender mainstreaming in entities of the United Nations system

Statement submitted by Radin Institute for Family Health Education and Promotion, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22170 (E) 070205

Women's health, current challenges and future strategies in the twenty-first century

Health is a basic human right for women and girls and essential for their social and economic development. Women's Health promotion should be recognized as a core strategy for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls in the 21st century. The ultimate goal could be to increase health expectancy for women and girls, and to narrow the gap in health expectancy between countries and groups.

New public health issues and challenges emerging in the field of women's health have demonstrated a need to re-examine and update the international agenda for women's health promotion in the 21st century. To advance this concept, governments have to begin a process to identify continuing or emerging gaps in knowledge and to develop research-based strategies that will result in improved health status for all women.

We can be heartened by initiatives by government, researchers, health professionals and diverse communities of women to attend thoughtfully and energetically to women's health concerns. We can be encouraged by the broader understanding of the determinants of women's health. In fortifying both the conceptual shifts taking place and our common ground, we should continue to develop policies and practices which, focused on women's equity, increasingly enable women's health. We need to recognize that major prerequisites for women's health are peace, housing, education, social security, social relations, food, income, empowerment, gender equity, sustainable resource use, and social justice. Poverty is the greatest threat to women's health.

It is vital that women's health promotion evolves to meet changes in the determinants of health. Transnational factors also have a significant impact on women's health. These include the integration of the global economy, financial markets and trade, access to media and communication technology, as well as environmental degradation due to the irresponsible use of resources.

Governments need to set a well defined initiative for women's health promotion that offers a vision and focus for women's health into the next century. It should reflect the firm commitment of all stakeholders on women's health promotion to draw upon the widest range of resources to tackle women's health determinants in the 21st century.

Women's health promotion strategies can develop and change lifestyles, and the social, economic and environmental conditions which determine health within family and society. Women's health promotion could be a practical approach to achieve greater gender equity. We encourage all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to focus on four key strategies for success: 1) building healthy women and healthy girls public policy 2) creating a supportive environment, 3) strengthening community action, 4) redesigning health services.

We call attention to health concerns affecting the health status of women based on cultural factors, socio-economic conditions, and issues of race and gender. Cultural beliefs and practices associated with causes and treatment of illness, and other lifestyle behaviors, are important determinants of women's health status, and in the prevention of morbidity and mortality. The lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of women's health-care providers toward the rural recipient, remains an issue in rural communities, and continues to threaten the cost of effective women's health care, and contributes to a higher risk of poor health among women.

Despite enormous social, economic and racial barriers, and fragmented health services, many women who utilize public health services have health strengths and coping strategies that enable them to live healthily and productively, and raise healthy children who are safe and constructive. We seldom look at this. To understand

how women prosper and protect their own and their children's health and well being, despite enormous odds, would, in fact, enable us to design interventions based on individual and cultural strengths, which may ultimately have a greater impact.

With the expectation that research conducted on women will involve women in the planning and design, implementation, evaluation, and interpretation of results of research studies, and will involve women who are from multiculturally and socio-economically diverse backgrounds, we suggest focused efforts on the following areas: 1) How the perception of being a public health recipient (particularly from a young age onward), where choice of provider and appointments is usually not self-selected and services are generally free, affects women's self-identity and self-reliance, particularly one's ability to make knowledge-based reproductive and other healthy life choices, 2) How gender identity and responsibility are affected and contribute to reproductive health clinics that primarily focus on females, 3) Effects of the media on healthy gender identification and sound health practices on female adolescents and adult women, 4) Continued multicultural, sound contraceptive research and development.

At the same time, we invite all stakeholders to address cardiovascular disorders, endocrine disorders, osteoporosis, and mental health and illness in women and preventive measures in girls. These health concerns are not controversial and do not come under the same political scrutiny as do reproductive and sexual health issues. To maintain and improve the status of women, we must ensure that these issues are addressed.

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) says it clearly: "the major barrier for women to the achievement of the highest attainable standard of health is inequality, both between women and men and among women"; thus, countering the historical and systemic oppression of women must be foremost in our minds as we work to influence policy and practice at all levels - in government, in health services, and in communities.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Altrusa International, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian International Women's Association, Associated Country Women of the World, Baha'i International Community, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, International Alliance of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Soroptimist International, Trickle Up Program, United Nations Association of the USA, United States Committee for UNIFEM, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Young Women's Christian Association and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22233 (E) 080205

Statement

We, the international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and members of the NGO Committee on UNIFEM, are in strong support of the leadership provided by the United Nations Development Fund for Women toward fulfilling the commitments made to the *Platform for Action* adopted at the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

Since its creation by the UN General Assembly in 1976, the realization of women's human rights is at the centre of all of UNIFEM's work. The Beijing *Platform for Action*, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security have become the framing documents for UNIFEM's efforts.

In fulfilling its mandate to serve as a catalyst to ensure the involvement of women in mainstream development activities, especially at the pre-investment stage, UNIFEM provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that foster women's empowerment and gender equality.

Through its activities at national, regional and local levels UNIFEM has developed four areas of particular expertise as their focus in the next four years: reducing feminized poverty, ending violence against women of all ages, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war.

In the area of reducing feminized poverty, UNIFEM's work in 2003 concentrated on women migrant workers and balancing budgets for gender equality.

- To assist women in making their labour abroad the foundation for a better future at home, UNIFEM has worked to enhance migration policies and legislation, strengthen women migrant workers' organizations and facilitate dialogue between countries of origin and destination to advance workers' human rights.

- In 20 countries UNIFEM has supported the development of gender-responsive budgets that look at how the allocation of public resources benefits women and men and addresses gender equality requirements.

In its focus on ending violence against women, it should be noted that in 1996 the UN General Assembly established a Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women administered by UNIFEM. Since its inception the Trust Fund has awarded US$8.3 million to 175 initiatives in 96 countries. Grant applications from grass-roots organizations seeking Trust Fund support exceed by many times the financial assets of the Trust Fund. We urge Member States, nongovernmental organizations and private donors to support generously this exceptional Fund.

- In addition, in 2003 anti-violence legislation was a focus of UNIFEM's program work. The Train of Hope, a three-year campaign conducted in nine CIS countries reached several million people, raising public awareness of violence against women and building extensive networks between crisis centres, politicians, media and research institutions.

- In Eastern and Southern Africa UNIFEM projects engaged men to talk to other men in advocating for an end to violence against women.

In approaching the issue of halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, UNIFEM's work in 2003 included:

- Highlighting the links between violence and HIV/AIDS.

- Promoting the development of gender-responsive HIV/AIDS policies for health care which address discriminatory practices for pregnant women and equal access to anti-retroviral drugs.

- Supporting women living with HIV/AIDS to advocate for a future in which they can live without stigma and violence and continue to lead healthy, meaningful lives.

As a continuing focus of its attention, UNIFEM has long worked to ensure that women have the ability and opportunity to participate in decision-making at all levels.

- In post-conflict situations when new constitutions and legislative structures are being created, UNIFEM offered training for women's organizations to participate in the national debate.

- UNIFEM provided significant support to the constitutional processes in Afghanistan that led to the provision of equality between men and women in the nation's new Constitution in 2003.

- UNIFEM has worked around the world to stimulate implementation of the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), focusing on women's participation as a priority.

UNIFEM's effective partnerships within the UN system and its collaboration with women's organizations have made it an important and effective agency for the advancement of women and girls. We members of the NGO Committee on UNIFEM ask for your continued and increased support of its important, unfinished work.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by International Council of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of University Women, Soroptimist International and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22239 (E) 080205

Statement

The five-member organizations of Project Five-O: International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Council of Women, International Federation of University Women, Soroptimist International and Zonta International, each in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, are endeavoring to further women's rights and to promote equality, development and peace, both in programs and advocacy of our individual organizations and through our joint activities and projects.

Project Five-O was founded after the Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen. In partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Project Five-O's programs have provided economic opportunities, education and training for thousands of local women in developing countries throughout the world. Our projects have enabled women to advance their legal, political, health and professional status and improve the lives of their families.

Yet, despite many gains for women since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the United Nations estimates that women still lag behind in virtually all aspects of life in many parts of the world. Issues of older women and mental health concerns for women have been added to the tableaux of major concerns for the advancement of women. The special session of the General Assembly held in June 2000 identified new obstacles and challenges for women's rights and equality such as the uneven benefits of the global economy and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

As women continue to make up the majority of those living in poverty, and who suffer from illiteracy, violence, poor nutrition, ill health, and dislocation, this ten-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action is a crucial time in history for Member States, United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations, other civil society entities and the private sector to commit themselves with renewed energy and purpose to the actualization of the broad spectrum of equal rights and opportunity for women and girls. These rights are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and further elaborated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The political will to move forward on the complete agenda of women's rights necessitates not only the strengthening of partnerships between governments, the United Nations system, regional and international institutions and non-governmental organizations, but the forging of strong partnerships between men and women in the pursuit of gender equality. It is only through a partnership of respect, shared responsibilities and equal power that the removal of all obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life that a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making can be achieved. This must include a commitment by men to address socially constructed gender roles in the family and the community and earnestly punish all violence against women.

Ensuring universal education for girls is crucial to providing opportunity and promoting gender equality in both the present and the future. Education for girls has a proven role in reducing poverty, improving the health of women and their children, preventing HIV/AIDS, reducing incidents of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriage, and increasing self-confidence. All advocates for women's rights and gender equality must work to eliminate the economic and social conditions that keep girls out of school.

Eliminating violence against women in all its insidious forms - domestic violence, trafficking, and armed conflict - must be a major commitment of the entire international community. We urge commitment to the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325.

Statistical information on most every facet of the lives of women and girls is woefully inadequate. Many children are unregistered at birth and information on child brides and migrant women difficult to obtain. Countries need to collect more and better information about women so an accurate assessment of their condition and needs can be addressed.

Only with more complete information can the achievement of benchmarks and measures for the advancement of women worldwide be assessed.

Information technology has a greater impact on our society than ever before. In this context, the important responsibility of the media in breaking down gender stereotypes and promoting positive examples of women's equality is obvious.

Why are we still so far from the fulfillment of the Platform for Action and other international commitments to women? One key reason is that financial resources to date have been grossly inadequate. The expansion of gender budgeting coupled with the strengthening of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women at all levels of government can aid Member States in allocating adequate resources to programs that benefit women. Regional and international financial institutions must continue to invest in women as the best means to promote economic and social well-being.

We, Project Five-O partners, are eager to move forward in our work to implement the Platform for Action and address other challenges in partnership with the United Nations and the women and men of the world committed to gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/8

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Coordination française du lobby européen des femmes, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22245 (E) 150205

Statement

Given the following recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action:

"Religion, spirituality and belief play a central role in the lives of millions of women and men... The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is inalienable and must be universally enjoyed...However, it is acknowledged that any form of extremism may have a negative impact on women and can lead to violence and discrimination." (Beijing Platform for Action, Article 24)

"Governments must condemn violence against women and refrain from invoking any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination as set out in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women." (Beijing Platform for Action, Article 124).

Given the NGO recommendation at the CEE UN Regional Conference for Beijing + 5 (Geneva, January 2000):

"NGOs esteem that the increase of religious extremisms threatens the enjoyment, by women, of the full equality of all their human rights"

We reaffirm that certain practices, models and religious constraints limit the recognition of women's full capacity, of their rights and of the **effective carrying out of parity between women and men.**

We live in societies ruled by law, and all Member States of the United Nations having signed the International Pacts concerning Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Concerning Civil and Political Rights of 1966 accept this.

We urgently request that States respect these signatures and that the principles thus approved be effectively applied. These principles are universal; they are not Eastern, Western, Southern or Northern. Each citizen, woman and man, of a member State of the United Nations must enjoy full equality before the law and their rights must not be limited, even less ignored, under pretext of any religion, belief or philosophy whatsoever.

Based on the foregoing, the C.L.E.F. presents its recommendations on Relations between States and Religions.

- **Governments must ensure that the messages expressed in religious discourse do not exert any influence detrimental to women on civil society.**
- **Governments will not tolerate restrictions or denials made by any religious structures whatsoever of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed by nearly all member States, nor of prevailing legal provisions.**
- **Governments must ensure that these same religious structures respect and recommend unrestrictedly the principles of this Declaration and the prevailing legal provisions before granting them any public or financial support.**

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by International Union of Local Authorities, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22398 (E) 220205

Local Government Statement to Beijing+10

Women in local decision-making: leading global change

This statement is based on the inputs of mayors and councilors across the world gathered by *United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)*[1], the global local government organization.

Summary of Key Issues

In many countries local authorities are major employers through their responsibilities in public schools, hospitals, environment and transport. Local authorities have the capacity to create services such as day-care facilities. They also have responsibilities for basic education, basic health care and crucial services such as public transportation, drinking water, sanitation and the planning of cities where women and girls live. Even when local governments are not directly responsible for these services, it is to their local governments that citizens turn. It is therefore impossible to imagine the advancement of women without the deep involvement and commitment of local governments.

Yet the significant impact that local authorities have on the lives of women is not sufficiently recognized in the Beijing Platform for Action. Local governments have nevertheless made significant progress over the past ten years in developing a *local government platform for action,* the local version of the UN equality agenda.

The role of local government in facilitating the local realization of the Platform for Action is critical because:

1. Communities where all citizens are empowered to participate in social, economic and political opportunities are instrumental in the eradication of poverty. **Inclusive local governments** are crucial to achieving the kind of governance systems necessary to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

2. Although only two of the eight **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** explicitly mention women, it is clear that every goal has a direct impact on the lives of women. Poverty has a female face, as does HIV, childcare and education. Local governments are responsible for providing services in each of those fields and need support and recognition as leaders for global change. By working on the advancement of women we are not only improving the living conditions of this group but making full use of the positive potential for change for half of the world's population, for the benefit of all men and women.

[1] *United Cities and Local Governments* is the worldwide advocate of all local governments, big and small: cities, towns and their associations. Gathering contributions of 1000 leading cities around the world and practically all the existing associations in the globe, it is a membership based organization that represents the political representatives of some three billion citizens worldwide, from 112 countries around the globe. For more information, visit www.cities-localgovernments.org.

3. The demonstrated capacity of women to take care of their families and communities needs to be translated **into political participation** if true change is to be achieved. The promotion of women's participation in local decision-making should play a pivotal role in the global strategy for the next ten years.

Actions undertaken by local authorities and their associations: *Local Government Platform for Action*

1. Local Governments have direct responsibility in the majority of the 12 areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action:

   Poverty: The lack of drinking water, electricity or sanitation infrastructures are expressions of poverty and are areas where local governments have a direct responsibility. Urban planning and slum upgrading have direct impact on the living conditions of women, who form the majority of the poor.

   Education and training: The lack of proper resources to invest in schools and ensure the schooling of girls determines the disadvantaged position of the women of the future.

   Health: Water points in slum areas, public toilets and even family hospitals are the responsibility of local governments without resources in poor countries. Investing in the capacity of local government to provide universal basic services is investing in healthier women and families.

   Violence: Local governments have vast experience in developing services for the protection of women such as municipal centers for women victims of domestic violence. Millions of women around the world have started a better life with their children with the support of these centers, which offer them refuge until they can support themselves.

   Economy: The promotion of private-public partnerships and creating an adequate environment for development, for example through City Development Strategies, are important local government responsibilities which influence the opportunities of women and communities.

   Human rights and avoiding discrimination: Inclusive governance structures can promote respect for human rights and facilitate the kind of positive social change necessary to support the advancement of women. For instance, local legal frameworks and municipal policies have provided encouraging reports of increased employment opportunities and more equal conditions.

2. In 2000, Local Governments expressed their concern before the United Nations General Assembly about the lack of reference to local governments' role in the *Platform for Action*. Since 2000 local governments from more than 112 countries, gathered in ***UCLG,*** have been working to achieve the equality objectives of the Platform in all the fields mentioned above.

3. Local Governments and their Associations have dedicated their own human and financial resources and have often taken the lead in developing innovative strategies for women's advancement. The establishment of broader partnerships with international institutions and grass-roots women organizations has played an important role in our work over the past 5 years.

4. A core focus has been Objective G1: **Ensuring women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making**; and Objective G2: **Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership**. The equal representation of women and men in elected posts is a priority objective, because of the impact this has on other spheres of activity. Increased participation of women in political life contributes to women friendly services, greater employment of women and policy development based on the specific needs of women and girls.

5. In all countries of the world, women are still under-represented in elected positions. However, contrary to stagnation at the national level[2], the numbers of women in decision-making positions at the local level are gradually increasing, often thanks to the introduction of quota systems, as in the new democracies in Africa, and to increased decentralization, particularly in Latin America. It is notable that the percentage of women councilors is higher in almost all countries around the world than the percentage of women parliamentarians.

6. Experience in local politics gives women unique and important opportunities to develop their capacities and the necessary support for office in other spheres of government. Further, more women in decision-making provides new approaches that benefit the general advancement of women and promotes the changes in mentality that are crucial for the future.

7. Since Beijing+5 in 2000, local governments have come together to form a new world organization, ***UCLG***, which has gender equality as a core policy objective. Building on the broad experience of its founding organizations, UCLG received at its Founding Congress a democratic mandate to promote the role of women in local government.

8. In 2002 the world association of local governments, supported by the Netherlands Foreign Affairs Ministry, started the implementation of a ***Global Programme for the Promotion of the Participation of Women in Local Decision-Making***. This unique programme is designed and implemented by Local Government Associations (LGAs) at global, regional and national levels. The recipients are both women politicians and local governments that want to increase their capacity to promote gender equality.

9. Through ***UCLG,*** Local Government Associations have developed a mapping mechanism to collect data on the status of women in local decision-making. A global database with an overview of the percentages of women elected officials has been set up and is being updated regularly. The data collected allows us to conclude that the participation of women in local politics is increasing and surpasses the percentages of participation in national politics at parliamentary level. It also shows that the gap between developed and developing countries is closing, with developed countries in southern Europe, where participation is decreasing marginally, showing lower women participation than countries in Latin America and Africa. The application of quotas is highlighted as a key instrument.

10. Another key objective is supporting the establishment of national, regional and global networks of elected women representatives. This responds to the Beijing+5 recommendation to build and strengthen solidarity among women. These support networks facilitate exchange but also provide brainstorming mechanisms to promote change and innovation. Interregional exchange has led to the replication of mechanisms, such as quota systems, that have proven successful around the world. Elected women networks are important tools not only in

[2] See www.cities-localgovernments.org

ensuring continuity in political participation but also in promoting the development of gender-sensitive policies.

11. Advancement mechanisms need to be applied in political parties to ensure an increase in the number of women candidates for eligible positions but also to create changes to political cultures that make it difficult for women to participate in politics, such as meeting at late hours and lack of funding. Local elected women networks supported by the associations of local authorities, have promoted the creation of women caucuses within their respective political parties to lobby for the inclusion of advancement mechanisms.

12. Local governments have actively promoted public debate on the role of municipalities in local equality through promoting the Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government which has been ratified by 94 local government organizations from 24 different countries.

13. ***UCLG*** and its members have developed international communication tools on the importance of gender equality for the development of democracy. LGAs have raised awareness of the specific needs of women by organizing and supporting thematic seminars and conferences around the world.

14. Over the past five years LGAs around the globe have developed strategic plans for gender advancement and support mechanisms for women elected representatives, such as training courses and mentoring systems.

Lessons learned and future action of UCLG and its membership

15. Awareness-raising campaigns need to be more targeted to men, boys and girls if the necessary social change is to be achieved.

16. *"Local government is in a unique position to contribute to the global struggle for gender equality...The systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and the quality of the activities of local government."*[3]

17. Improved local governance, efficient decentralization and strong democratic local governments are crucial to gender advancement and to equality.

18. Although only two of the eight MDGs are directly linked with women advancement, all of them have a direct impact on the lives of women. Women are consequently key actors for the achievement of these goals. The role of women in the advancement of communities, which is broadly recognized by practitioners working in the field, is not sufficiently reflected in international and national policies.

19. Equally, the acknowledgement of the experience of local government in development needs to be reflected in international declarations such as those on the MDGs.

20. It is not only necessary to develop mechanisms to get women into political office, but also to develop tools to ensure these mechanisms are well utilized, and to support women once they are elected. Women politicians often disappoint their female constituency, partially due to

[3] Paragraphs 10 and 11, IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, 1998.

lack of information between the two groups which could be overcome with the establishment of regular meetings.

21. Strong partnerships between grass-roots women and LGAs is essential to increase participation in politics but also to support elected women while in office and to ensure gender-sensitive policies.

Local Government commitments before the international community

On behalf of hundreds of thousands of local authorities and their national associations worldwide, ***UCLG*** commits itself to appeal for:

22. Local democratic processes that recognize social inclusion and citizens' rights to basic services to be acknowledged as crucial to improving the quality of life of women, and local governments that develop gender-friendly policies to be supported by international agencies.

23. Support from international and national development agencies for local processes assessing the needs of women.

24. The need to keep gender policies as a priority on the international agenda, to ensure gender issues are not relegated to mainstreaming and to develop a critical mass to support research into innovative mechanisms for women advancement.

25. Support from national and international agencies for partnerships between local authorities and women groups.

26. Finally, local governments express their deep concern for the low profile given to the Beijing +10 process, and request that national governments put the Women Empowerment Agenda at the top of international policy development.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/10

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (c) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Human Rights Advocates, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22404 (E) 180205

Statement

1. One of the greatest gender crimes of the 21st century is the trafficking of women and children for means of forced prostitution and sexual slavery. Individual member States must work towards full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the elimination of all forms of violence against women, especially the trafficking of women. This statement focuses on the need of member States to address the role they themselves play in the trafficking of women, and more specifically: the demand created by their military and UN peacekeeping troops and personnel; the lack of adequate protection of vulnerable populations such as migrant workers and victims of natural disasters; and the eradication of safe and legal migration options due to the strict immigration laws and policies of destination States.

2. Trafficking is a direct manifestation of deeply ingrained gender inequalities that transcend national borders. Women and children who are trafficked are often regarded as commodities to be bought and sold in order to satisfy a male patron's desires as well as the profit motive of the traffickers. Because of the ever-increasing demand for women and children, the escalation of female unemployment in countries of origin, and the continuous rise in the irregular migration of women and children, human trafficking has become one of the largest forms of profit for organized crime, second only to the drug trade.

3. Some major perpetrators of the trafficking industry and a substantial part of the demand are an individual member State's own armed forces and UN peacekeeping soldiers and personnel. Within the military structure, it is often deemed not only acceptable, but also appropriate to buy and sell women in order to sexually satisfy the almost exclusively male troops. Generally, commanders do nothing to change the practices of their troops, and often shrug them off with little more than a "boys will be boys" attitude. That nonchalant attitude and lack of accountability makes it especially difficult to address the problems associated with trafficking.

4. Migration has been directly linked to the trafficking of women and children. Reports show that women who face zero opportunities for employment, are employed in heinous conditions, or are being paid too little to survive, migrate within their own borders and across borders in search of employment. Strict immigration laws and anti-migration policies, however, have virtually eliminated all forms of legal and safe migration. With no other available options, women are forced to seek migration assistance from traffickers and are regularly sold into sexual slavery or forced to become prostitutes in order to pay off the debt incurred for the assistance.

5. Victims of natural disasters are extremely vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, particularly women and children. The Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 left thousands of children orphaned and at risk of being trafficked. Less than two weeks into the recovery process, UNICEF expressed concern over rumors of orphaned children becoming victims of trafficking, and States began taking measures to prevent traffickers from exploiting the already devastated victims. Indonesia, for example, "slapped restrictions on youngsters leaving the country, ordered police commanders to be on the lookout for trafficking, and posted special guards at refugee camps."[1]

6. The Fourth World Conference of Women of 1995 produced the Beijing Platform for Action (Platform), which continues today to serve as an "agenda for women's empowerment." Strategic Objective D of the Platform deals specifically with violence against women, and contains a subsection focusing on the elimination of trafficking in women.[2] At the 48th Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission agreed that the review and appraisal of the Platform would be centered on implementation at the national level. In order for individual member States to implement and fulfill the objectives of the Platform, and in particular Objective D, they must acknowledge the role their soldiers, laws, and policies play in perpetuating violence against women, and more specifically, the trafficking of women and children. States will not be successful in eliminating trafficking until they address the actions of their own military soldiers and personnel, the lack of employment opportunities for their women, and the effects of their immigration and trafficking laws and policies.

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[1] Associated Press, *Tsunami Children Lost, Vulnerable*, CBSNEWS.com (Jan. 5, 2005).

[2] Beijing Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, 17 October 1995, A/CONF.177/20 (1995).

State Militaries and UN Peacekeeping Troops

7. There is a high correlation between military presence within a state and the trafficking of women. Due to the permitted and often encouraged use of local women and/or prostitutes for purposes of "rest and relaxation" for the soldiers, the formation of a thriving red light district closely follows the establishment of a military base or camp. There is considerable evidence of forced prostitution by military forces as a government-regulated industry to service the stationed troops. As the demand for this "rest and relaxation" increases, women are increasingly trafficked into the area to increase supply for the troops. [3]

8. For example, United Nations personnel and peacekeeping troops have been involved in trafficking and sexual exploitation of women. In Cambodia in 1993, the sexual exploitation of women and girls by UNTAC troops was brushed aside as "boys will be boys." In 2001, UN police officers in Kosovo set up brothels and trafficked Eastern European women to fill them. One year later, UN relief workers in West Africa were caught demanding sexual favors in return for aid. Currently, the peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo is receiving attention, with scores of charges of rape and sexual exploitation of women and girls.[4]

9. The United States is one country that has recognized its military's involvement in the violations of women's rights. The US government has recently increased focus on its military's involvement in trafficking. In 2003, the Department of Defense established a "zero tolerance" policy and the DoD Inspector General created a Human Trafficking Assessment Project. The Project has focused on the military's actions in the Republic of Korea, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, and has placed businesses and establishments identified as being involved in trafficking and prostitution off-limits to its soldiers.[5] The effects of these policies, however, are still unclear.

Migration

10. In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action estimated 125 million people to be migrants, refugees and displaced persons. More recent statistics show that there are over 175 million migrants worldwide, more than half of which are women. This "massive movement of people" is resulting in countless cases of abuse and exploitation of these migrants, with many becoming victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.[6]

11. Faced with the little to no employment opportunities at home, workers are forced to migrate to find employment. When domestic labor laws discriminate against these migrant workers, it encourages and very often results in exploitation and abuse. For example, the lack of adequate labor law protection in Japan has proliferated the trafficking of Thai, Filipino, Korean, Eastern European, and South American women and children into Japan's sex industry.[7]

12. Strict immigration laws and border controls of destination countries around the world have made legal and safe migration virtually impossible for impoverished migrants and have resulted in the proliferation of irregular migration. Most migrants do not have the means or ability to migrate legally, and as a result seek assistance from third parties who arrange for and assist in their immigration, for a price. Women migrants are extremely vulnerable in this situation and very often find themselves forced to work off their debts by prostituting themselves upon arrival in their destination country.

13. Although many states are beginning to recognize the global crisis of human trafficking, there has been little attention given to the protection of migrants. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers

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[3] Isabelle Talleyrand, *Note: Military Prostitution: How the Authorities Worldwide Aid and Abet International Trafficking in Women*, 27 Syracuse J. Int'l L. & Com. 151 (Winter 2000).

[4] Maggie Farley, *Congo Sex Scandal Prompts Efforts for Reform in U.N.*, latimes.com (Dec. 18, 2004).

[5] Statement by Joseph E. Schmitz, Inspector General of the Department of Defense, *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Forum for Security Cooperation: "Suppressing Slavery in the 21st Century: From Legislation to Enforcement"* (Nov. 17, 2004).
See http://www.dodig.osd.mil/IGInformation/Speeches/OSCE_Forum_112204K.pdf

[6] Beijing Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, 17 October 1995.

[7] Amnesty International, *Protecting Migrant Workers' Rights*, The Wire (Dec. 2004).

came into force in July 2003, almost 13 years after adoption by the General Assembly. Only 27 of the 191 UN Member States have ratified the convention, with no ratifications by industrial countries, despite the enormous contributions that migrant workers make to their economies.[8] Without national laws protecting them, migrants are easy and obvious targets for exploitation.

Recommendations

14. In implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, States must focus on the eradication of violence against women, specifically the trafficking of women and children. Thus, Human Rights Advocates urges the Commission on the Status of Women to recommend Member States to work towards the elimination of the trafficking of women and children by:

a. Performing an in-depth study on the actions of their military and peacekeeping troops, including how they contribute to the demand for prostitutes and the proliferation of trafficking;

b. Creating, implementing and improving mandatory gender-sensitivity training for military troops and personnel, and holding military troop and personnel accountable for their actions by creating and implementing effective mechanisms and procedures to ensure the prosecution of violators of the codes of conduct;

c. Institute assessment studies on actions States have taken to address and reduce trafficking;

d. Reviewing their migration legislation and policies, and conducting in-depth studies on the causes of irregular migration and the correlation between irregular migration, migration legislation and policies and the trafficking of women and children;

e. Ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

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[8] Thalif Dean, *International Migrants Day: More Women, More at Risk*, Interpress Service News Agency (Dec. 17, 2004). See http://ipsnews.net.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/11

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by the World Veterans Federation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22410 (E) 280205

Statement

As an international organization of associations of war veterans and war victims, and most recently, former peacekeepers, the WVF continues to be a dedicated advocate for the principles of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On an international level, the WVF works with the United Nations and its agencies, other non-governmental organizations, in coalitions and other international entities, and governments, for these principles for all peoples, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or gender. Member associations are active within their countries and regions on behalf of peace, equality and justice, extending WVF objectives and policies into national venues.

Appropriately, the Commission this year reviews the implementation of the Platform for Action (adopted by the Beijing Conference in 1995), and the outcome documents from the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly, ten years after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. It is timely that the Committee also will seek to identify current challenges and develop new strategies to meet them.

Women and armed conflict Representing civilian victims of war as well as war veterans, the WVF became aware that armed conflicts have disastrous impacts and consequences for women as well as men, particularly since 90% of the casualties of modern conflicts are women and children. In 1984, the WVF created a Standing Committee on Women to study the situation and provide a voice for women in war, and to develop an active partnership between the men and women who experienced war in different ways, which would further the goals of the organization on behalf of equality, justice and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In the 1980s and 1990s, WVF sought to bring international attention to the difficult situation of civilian women, including refugees, caught in armed conflicts. We were pleased that the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 identified " **women and armed conflict"** as one of the twelve critical areas of concern in its **Platform for Action.**

Human Rights Advocate WVF recognized that the sufferings and abuse of women war victims stemmed from their second-class status and denial of their human rights. This led WVF, a strong human rights advocate, to espouse the cause of women's human rights on behalf of all those who suffer abuse and exploitation because of the denial of their human rights. In 1992, in its statement to the UNCSW, WVF urged that the status of women war victims and war veterans be included among its concerns, arguing that the drive for equality and elimination of discrimination against women goes hand in hand with the protection of their human rights. The WVF presentation to the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 called for a **reaffirmation of the universality of human rights** and stated that **"women's rights are an integral part of human rights and should not be defined according to a different moral norm or modified for cultural or religious reasons."** Over the years, WVF consistently has supported the universality of human rights and the CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and protocols, conventions, and UN conferences affecting women's interests such as development, environment, mines removal, small arms and disarmament initiatives.

WVF concurs with the Final Outcome Document (23rd special session of the GA, 2000) that "***Peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men and development... The targeting of civilians, including women and children, the displacement of people, and the recruitment of child soldiers in violation of national or international law, by state and/or non-state actors, which occur in armed conflicts, have had a particular adverse impact on gender equality and women's human rights***"

Rape as A War Crime Rape and other sexual violence against women during armed conflicts has always been looked at as a regrettable part of war. Even the war crimes trials of Nuremberg and Tokyo did not prosecute such crimes. The prevalence of rape in current conflicts continues as an abomination. WVF unequivocally condemns rape as a weapon of war, and urges that it be declared a war crime. For many years, WVF has been a passionate advocate for the creation of a permanent International Criminal Court to prosecute war crimes. Alone and as a member of NGO coalitions, WVF used its influence to persuade governments to sign on to the Statute of the Court. Furthermore, it has urged that gender-related crimes be included as war crimes or crimes against humanity and that strong penalties be enacted for all acts of sexual and other violence against women during wartime. Such action would end the impunity that perpetrators of such crimes have enjoyed in the past. Not only does the Court exist now, but the international tribunals for Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda

have successfully prosecuted war crimes of rape. In 1993, the WVF's Standing Committee on Women presented a well-received seminar on rape in cooperation with the Turkish veterans group in Istanbul, and also testified before UN Experts Groups.

Comfort Women WVF was one of the first organizations to call attention to the tragic situation of the 'comfort women' of World War II, the hundreds of thousands of mostly Asian women who were captured by the Japanese Army, and with the support of the government, forced into sexual slavery until the war ended. These crimes were never prosecuted, but were unknown since the traumatized survivors did not speak out. WVF at its 1997 General Assembly in Seoul "*condemned all violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict...*" and called upon all countries, international agencies and NGOs "*to eliminate the violation of the rights of women in war time, emphasizing the need for appropriate systems and special compensation for the victims.*" As the surviving 'comfort women' seek an official apology and modest reparations from the Japanese government, WVF continues to support these victims of war.

Post-War Reintegration The rehabilitation and reintegration of those affected by armed conflicts, including civilian victims of war (women and children), is another important concern of the WVF. To help national governments provide appropriate assistance for these victims, WVF has developed a comprehensive manual "*Guidelines to Basic Rights for War Veterans and Victims of War*" which was presented to the follow-up conference of the World Summit for Social Development in 1998. Also, the WVF has organized six international conferences on legislation to facilitate the actions needed by governments to assist veterans and civilian victims in their rehabilitation. While responsibility for assistance for returning combatants is often recognized by governments, that sense of debt does not extend to the civilian victims of war – mostly women and children - whose lives were equally disrupted and damaged. Hence little attention has been given to developing strategies for the rehabilitation and reintegration of civilian victims of armed conflicts.

Among the most traumatized civilian victims of war (in the millions) are refugee and displaced women who suffer incredible violence and deprivation all along their route of flight, often from those who are supposed to assist them. The plight of these women received special attention from the WVF, including working with the UNHCR to develop guidelines for gender-sensitive treatment by field staff. The WVF Committee on Women took leadership roles in organizing Working Groups and coalitions, arranging workshops at UN NGO meetings, and providing advocacy for women displaced by armed conflicts. A resolution passed by WVF in 2000 calling for assistance for victims of violence, "*considers it important that returning refugees receive the necessary protection as well as the help they need in order to be able to build up their lives in destroyed areas...*"

Children in Peril Deeply concerned about the fate of children in armed conflicts, WVF hailed the Machel Report on the impact of armed conflict on children and called upon its members to urge their governments to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol to outlaw the recruitment of children under 18 to serve in armed forces and insurgent and militia groups. WVF is a member of the Coalition on Child Soldiers, and has strongly supported the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on this searing issue. WVF participated actively in the three Preparatory meetings and the General Assembly Special Session on Children (May 2002) to insure that the Final Outcome Document emphasizes that children caught in armed conflicts will need extensive services and support, including education, health care and counseling, after the conflicts end.

Women in Peace Processes When the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 in October, 2000, new possibilities were opened for women to become active participants in all aspects of peace negotiations, conflict resolution, peace making and in the key steps of rebuilding war-torn societies. Secretary-General Annan told the Council: "...**the organization was created to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It also proclaims the equal rights of men and women. We must live up to both challenges, or we shall not succeed fully in either... women, who know the price of conflict so well, are also often better equipped than men to prevent or resolve it. And yet the potential contribution of women to peace and security remains severely undervalued. You recognized that peace inextricably is linked to equality between women and men. And you declared that maintaining and promoting peace and security requires women's equal participation in decision making...**"

We were pleased that the Commission made the principles of Resolution 1325 one of its themes of its 48th meeting in 2004. From background studies and 'aides memoires', it became clear that in most peace negotiations and in the

process of restoring a post-war society, unless women are involved, women's concerns are not considered. Those initiating post-war reconstruction strategies rarely take into account the trauma and suffering of the civilian women; hence, they are left out of rehabilitation and reconstruction initiatives. If women are involved early on in the peace process, especially in writing the peace agreement or a new constitution, their interests will be considered and be part of the agenda.

History has taught us that reconstructed societies may emerge that may or may not improve the status of women and their human rights. Unless there is careful planning, old inequalities will persist, or even increase. When a new constitution was being written for Afghanistan recently, it was crucial that there was input from women and their advocates to enshrine women's legal rights. If those rights were not included from the outset, women's future roles in that country would have been circumscribed, with little hope of future redress.

Old and New Challenges: As the Commission deliberates in its 49th session, it embarks on a heavy programme of work, including reviewing national reports and questionnaires to get a picture of how the old challenges enunciated in the **Platform for Action** have been met. Probably progress can be seen in many areas, but from the perspective of women and human rights advocates, there are many old challenges which are still far from their goals. And there are new challenges. Resolution 1325 is one of them. Most important - it presents a window of opportunity for women to be part of the decision-making process in crucial stages of reconstituting a war-torn society. Such opportunities do not come frequently, so advantage much be taken of it.

Why a Fifth World Conference There have been calls for a Fifth World Conference on Women, to be held sometime before 2010. Resolution 1325 is one recent challenge that needs to be acted upon quickly. Only a world conference commands the kind of public and media attention – which draws in celebrities and leaders from all walks of life – to the issues and challenges that are needed. Many of the challenges would benefit from a fresh approach – a 'jump start' that might stimulate new ideas. Recent world events, man-made and natural disasters, reinforce this timely suggestion. For example, the recent Tsunami which left thousands of women and children survivors prey to violence, rape and exploitation, without institutional remedies, demonstrates the urgent need for a massive infusion of will and energy by the international community to advance the status of women. We hope that this Commission meeting will support the suggestion for convening a Fifth World Conference on Women so that the mechanisms for the UN holding such a conference will soon be put in place.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/12

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
26 January 2005
English
Original: Spanish

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Colombian Commission of Jurists, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22416 (E) 170205 280205

Obstacles to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and peacebuilding in Colombia

Ten years on from the Fourth World Conference on Women, the situation regarding the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Colombia remains unsatisfactory. The situation of Colombian women is ever more precarious, particularly as regards poverty eradication, sexual and reproductive health, and access to decent and equal working conditions.[1] In 2003, the "*situation as regards women's rights, despite some legislative advances, continued to be marked by discrimination, inequality, exclusion, family and sexual violence, and the trafficking of persons*".[2]

This is exacerbated by the lack of concrete State action to prevent and eradicate discrimination and violence against women and by the promotion of policies that seriously affect their human rights. In specific terms, the "democratic security" policy, which affects rights such as the right to personal freedom and integrity, freedom of expression and freedom of movement, among others, affects men and women differently. Arbitrary detentions and police raids constitute an invasion of privacy, stepping up the risk of gender-based violence. In turn, food blockades by combatants — and even by the police — affect women in particular, as they have primary responsibility for feeding the family group. In addition, this policy ignores the principle of distinction between combatants and non-combatants as enshrined in international humanitarian law and thereby places civilians at risk. "*The Government's 'democratic security' strategy is determined more by security considerations than by a concern for democracy.*"[3] Against this backdrop, the commitments laid down in the Beijing Platform for Action seem to have no place in the current Government's agenda.

Socio-political violence, including that caused by the armed conflict, seriously affects women's human rights and exacerbates gender-based violence.[4] According to statistics contained in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) National Human Development Report 2003 for Colombia, the number of women killed for conflict-related reasons outside of combat increased by 20 per cent between 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. During this period, women accounted for 6 per cent of all deaths in and outside combat and forced disappearances, 10 per cent of tortures, 11 per cent of all landmine-related deaths and 18 per cent of kidnappings. Moreover, 17 per cent of the human rights defenders killed were women, as were 16 per cent of all trade unionists and 16 per cent of people from indigenous communities.[5]

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[1] Report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Colombia, *Un paso adelante, dos atrás* (Bogotá, September 2004).

[2] Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Colombia (E/CN.4/2003/13 of 24 February 2003), para. 51.

[3] Report by Mr. Doudou Diène, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, on his mission to Colombia (E/CN.4/2004/18/Add.3 of 23 February 2004), para. 42.

[4] During 2003, more than one woman a day died because of socio-political violence. Of all the deaths recorded that year, 491 related to women. Of those, 442 were killed or "disappeared" for reasons not directly related to the armed conflict, i.e. in the home, street or workplace, and 315 were victims of political homicide or extrajudicial executions. Colombian Commission of Jurists, *En contravía de la recomendaciones internacionales* (Bogotá, December 2004), p.16.

[5] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — National Human Development Report 2003 for Colombia, *El conflicto, callejón con salida (Solutions to escape the conflict's impasse)*.

Forced displacement has become a problem of alarming dimensions. During 2003, approximately 207,607 people were forcibly displaced. This is in addition to the over 2 million people who have been displaced over the past seven years. The Government has tried to play down the situation by comparing the 2003 figures with those for 2002, which were even higher. This contrast is due in part to the fact that many people do not register because of threats or because they do not trust State care programmes, and monitoring systems therefore underreport the situation. "*Women, little girls and adolescents account for 50 per cent of the displaced population and little boys for perhaps another 25 per cent. For this significant group, leaving their homes means placing their lives and integrity at risk in 85 per cent of the national territory.*"[6]

Another factor hindering the implementation of the Platform for Action and agreements reached during Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) sessions[7] is that women are excluded from decision-making and negotiation processes with armed groups, owing to ignorance about the multifaceted relationship between women, violence and peace. "*Since this has traditionally been thought of as a man's issue, women and gender issues have, on the whole, been excluded from discussions about conflict and peace.*"[8] Women who have suffered at the hands of paramilitary groups have been excluded from the negotiations currently being held, on the Government's initiative, with such groups. In particular, "*none of the Government's proposals have recognized women and girls as victims of the conflict and no measures have been proposed or adopted to safeguard their rights, which have been massively and systematically violated. Neither have any mechanisms been adopted with a view to introducing special measures to protect raped or tortured women during existing judicial processes.*"[9] In addition, the Government, in consultation with paramilitaries, is pushing for legislation that will guarantee impunity for perpetrators of grave human rights violations.

Violence against women in the context of the armed conflict therefore takes second place in the negotiations with paramilitary groups, notwithstanding the right of victims of violence to truth, justice and redress. Moreover, during the negotiations, paramilitaries carried out attacks against women in blatant violation of the ceasefire agreement.

The Amnesty International report on violence against women in Colombia conveys the seriousness of the situation. According to the report, judicial authorities systematically allow sexual violence against women to go unpunished. In Colombia, the chances of victims of sexual violence having access to the courts and securing justice, once a complaint is lodged, are small.[10] Moreover, in the few cases in which

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[6] Report by the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) entitled *Condición de mujer. Situación de desplazamiento* (2004), p. 6.

[7] Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding (Forty-eighth session, March 2004).

[8] Report of the Conference organized by the Paz Urbana programme and the World Bank's Colombia Country Office entitled *Experiencias en América latina en género, conflicto y la construcción de la paz sostenible: un reto para Colombia* (2001), p. 16.

[9] Statement by the Federation of Spanish human rights NGOs at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

[10] Amnesty International, *Colombia. "Scarred bodies, hidden crimes": Sexual Violence against women in the armed conflict*, p. 24.

victims of sexual violence do decide to bring a complaint, the authorities often seek to dissuade them from doing so. Even if they persist, the case is unlikely to be fully and independently investigated. "*The prospect of a conviction is virtually zero, especially if the alleged perpetrator is a member of the security forces, the paramilitaries or the guerrilla. Every step of the process appears to be designed to block survivors' attempts to seek truth and justice.*"[11]

Conclusions

On the basis of the above and taking into account that:

- Women and girls in Colombia have become military targets and grave human rights violations are massively and systematically carried out against their persons, their bodies and their freedom;[12]
- One of the clearest expressions of the denial of gender justice is the failure to recognize women as special victims of the armed conflict. This denial is reflected in the absence of any public policy to combat impunity for offences committed against women;[13]
- The terms of the discussion in negotiations with paramilitaries have been reversed, as the benefits of demobilized combatants are deemed more important than the rights of victims. Not only are the victims, particularly women, excluded from the negotiations but a legal framework is being established that will promote impunity for violations of human rights and humanitarian law and favour the interests of paramilitary groups.

The Colombian State is ignoring its obligations under the American Convention on Human Rights, the Convention of Belém do Pará and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), among other treaties, with regard to the special protection of women. The State must take adequate and effective measures to protect women's rights, eradicate gender-based violence and revalidate and implement the agreements reached in the Beijing Platform for Action.

Colombian Commission of Jurists

January 2005

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[12] Federation of Spanish human rights NGOs, op. cit., p. 3.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/13

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22422 (E) 230205

Statement

Introduction

The review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Beijing + 5 is taking place in a global economic, political and social climate that threatens to weaken many gains achieved by women thus far.

Different local, national and regional organizations and groups will take up their own priorities within the context of the review, in accordance with their particular circumstances and needs.

Mentioned below are some of the key issues of concern to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a non-governmental organization whose mission is to promote leadership, advocacy and empowerment to effect social change and public policy, resulting in the improved well-being of individuals and families, especially African Americans and women. Recognizing that social action is personal, local and global, Delta's National Social Action Commission works collectively with the Sorority's national officers, regional and local membership, as well as coalition partners, to implement its social action agenda in these areas.

Empowerment through participation in the political process

Women's empowerment involves the raising of consciousness, identification of areas needing change, and development of effective policies and strategies to address them.

Political participation encompasses a wide range of actions and strategies, including voting, voter education, candidacy for national and local elections and supporting candidates who espouse gender-sensitive policies.

The Sorority will continue its active partnerships with major civil and human rights organizations in an ambitious and aggressive voter empowerment program. In that vein, it launched a campaign to support reauthorization of key provisions of the United States Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 provided the single greatest legislative victory in the African American struggle for political equality and democratic voice. Delta's current two-year campaign will begin with education and training sessions during Delta Days at the Nation's Capital, continue with community events and additional empowerment activities at other Delta events and culminate with the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act in 2007.

Addressing health disparities

Ensuring access to quality health care, whether for diagnostic treatment or preventive measures, is of critical importance to women's health and wellness. As women age and their need for health care grows, the likelihood of their being uninsured increases. In 2002, the US Census Bureau reported that health insurance coverage, considered a prerequisite of adequate medical care, was not only eroding but would likely worsen over the next several years.

With funding by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Sorority has launched the Delta health insurance education and advocacy program. Its goal is to train Delta members to effectively educate their communities about health care disparities and challenges African American women face in acquiring health insurance coverage.

Another important aspect of the Sorority's health initiatives focuses on educating the global community on how to decrease the AIDS pandemic. The number of HIV-infected women continues rising worldwide; clinical trials are insufficient and more attention is needed on reducing the high cost of HIV medication to women around the world.

Ratification of treaty bodies

The Sorority will continue to collaborate with other women's and human rights organizations to urge the United States Congress to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/14

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
31 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22542 (E) 010305

Statement

F.E.F.A.F - the EU umbrella NGO of national and regional associations representing stay-at-home Parents and Carers, calls on national Governments and the United Nations, respectively, to implement Strategic Objective H3 of the Beijing agreement in national, regional and international statistical services and relevant governmental and United Nations agencies.

The unremunerated work carried out within the family - education, supervision and care of children and elderly and/or disabled relatives - still mainly undertaken by women, has an economic value and is therefore essential to society and economy. This work must be undertaken as a matter of free choice; and neither those who undertake such work nor their families should be penalized in any way. Furthermore, such work should be facilitated so that women - and men - can freely choose their preferred life path.

There can be no clear planning or cost-benefit analysis for the care of children, the elderly and disabled without **reliable data** on **all types** of care: community-based care, institutional care **AND** unremunerated family-based work carried out within the family.

Where the contribution of unremunerated work is recognised, structured methods for rewarding such work - such as personal social welfare rights awarded equally to all those who provide the same service without or with remuneration - can be developed.

Therefore F.E.F.A.F. requests

the implementation of § 11 and 14 from CEDAW and 165g, 206 (f, g, o, p) and 209 from PFA Beijing,

- *particularly collecting data on*

  * *the economic value of unremunerated family-based work for the benefit of dependents*

  * *the impact of national and community policies on the basic unit of the family and all its members, notably in the domain of the elimination of discrimination, the struggle against domestic violence, the risk of poverty of female heads of households, pension policies for unremunerated parents and carers*

- *Methods of data collection on unremunerated work should be internationalised and include:*

  * *headings in the census and all relevant statistics for unremunerated work and workers, unremunerated agricultural and food production; unremunerated childcare, eldercare and care of the disabled; unremunerated community and NGOs support work*

  * *parallel GDP accounts for unremunerated agricultural, family caring and voluntary work*

  * *gender- and age-disaggregated information on unremunerated workers*

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/15

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Assembly of First Nations-National Indian Brotherhood, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22428 (E) 230205

Statement

One of the most important issues for First Nations women and the Assembly of First Nations is the recognition of our inherent right to self-determination as Indigenous Peoples. Like all Peoples under international law, this right guarantees our ability to freely determine our political status and pursue our economic, social and cultural development. In this regard, the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is critically important to our future as Indigenous women and nations.

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action contained eighteen commitments specifically directed at Indigenous women. Among these, one of the most significant was 230(o), which stated:

"Taking into account the need to ensure full respect for the human rights of indigenous people, consider a declaration on the rights of indigenous people for adoption by the General Assembly within the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and encourage the participation of indigenous women in the working group elaborating the draft declaration, in accordance with the provisions for the participation of organizations of indigenous people."

The United Nations General Assembly on Beijing+ 5 was meant to build upon and advance the Beijing commitments. In order to advance the Beijing commitment regarding the Draft Declaration, the Indigenous Women's Caucus requested the inclusion of language urging Governments to adopt the Draft Declaration without further delay in its present form. Unfortunately, this issue was not included in the 2000 outcome documents, despite its overwhelming importance to Indigenous women.

We now find ourselves at the end of the United Nations first Decade on the World's Indigenous People, without a consensus on the Draft Declaration. The AFN/NIB applauds the adoption of a resolution for a second Decade, but we are extremely concerned that States have not agreed upon a continuing mandate for the Working Group on the Draft Declaration. We believe that a second Decade would be meaningless if the mandate of the Working Group is not extended. Further, we believe that the adoption of a modified draft without the consensus of the Working Group would itself represent a violation of our human rights.

As Indigenous women in Canada, we are concerned with the collective and human rights of our Peoples. These rights include the recognition of our treaties, and the right to determine our own citizenship. The Draft Declaration contains the tools we need to address these issues on a domestic level, as well as other important issues such as the elimination of violence against women, drug abuse, disease and poverty, which affect us disproportionately as Indigenous women. When our right to self-determination is recognized and implemented, we will be able to address the damage wrought by colonialism, and seek the elimination of paternalistic structures and a return to our traditional social structures.

During this review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we again ask that States adopt the Draft Declaration in its present form without further delay.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/16

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
31 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Aland Islands Peace Institute, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22548 (E) 240205

Statement

The Aland Islands Peace Institute conducts research and offers educational programs focusing on conflict management, social security, security policy, autonomies and minorities. The unique character of the Aland Islands as a demilitarized, neutral, autonomous political entity is an important basis for the institute.

The Institute carries out empowerment projects together with young women in Lithuania.

A disproportionate share of the victims of trafficking in Western Europe is from Lithuania. Lithuania is not only a "source" country but also a country of transit and destination in the sex slavery business.

According to the Missing Persons Families Support Centre in Vilnius, the number of trafficked children is growing. In 2002, 22% of the victims of trafficking in their shelter were underage, whereas in 2003 50% were underage. Most of the victims are recruited among marginalised groups and many of them belong to minority groups.

The State programme against trafficking is not effective enough. Very little attention has been directed at long-term preventive activities in Lithuania.

The project "Girl Power" is carried out in cooperation with the Missing Persons Families Support Centre. It involves young women who are victims or at risk of being victims of trafficking. The project has introduced the Girl Group method in Lithuania. Girl Group leaders and trainers are educated. Empowerment, self-confidence and democracy are the corner stones of the training. The Girl Group method, which is developed in Sweden and Finland, has been adapted to the Lithuanian context, and serves as a new and innovative tool of prevention and of social reintegration for victims.

In Lithuania, as well as in Finland and Sweden, underage girls face many similar problems in becoming women. There are many other methods for trafficking prevention, but most of them only give short-term results. The Girl Group method gives sustainable results with a multiplication effect.

The starting point is the strength of the individual and the possibilities to strengthen one's own self-esteem and not, as in many other projects, the risks of being a victim and how to defend oneself when it is already too late.

The project includes training of Girl Group leaders, training of trainers, counselling and Network meetings and exchanges between Lithuanian and Nordic Girl Group leaders and trainers.

The Girl Group methodology has proven to be useful for a number of reasons. It enforces each girl's strength. It equips girls and young women with the tools necessary to participate in the democratic process. Thereby it also gives them a sense of coherence and inclusion. It empowers them to have a more positive outlook on life and think as creative people, not as victims.

The networks built by the Girl Groups can also function as safety nets and be a support base when hardships might arise later in life. Girl Groups are not courses with a specific curriculum. Girl Groups are flexible courses delivered through focus meetings where the needs and wants of the girls involved are met and supported.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/17

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
31 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Women's National Commission, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22554 (E) 280205

Statement

The Women's National Commission (WNC) is the official independent advisory body giving the views of women throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to the UK Government. The WNC has over 400 partner organisations and individual partners drawn from women's voluntary and community groups and organisations, professional associations, trade unions and faith groups. In addition, we work with women's organisations in the European Union and UK-based international organisations.

The WNC believes that the critical areas of concern in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are inextricably linked with the articles in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Gender is a cross-cutting issue in international agreements, and gender equality is most effectively promoted by mainstreaming it through all areas of policy development.

The WNC recognises the initiatives of the UK Government, non-governmental organisations and civil society toward furthering gender equality in the UK. Below, we list some achievements made since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

i. The UK Government acceding to the CEDAW Optional Protocol in December 2004.
ii. A number of new statutes around violence against women, including legislation on female genital mutilation, sexual offences and domestic violence, came into force. We appreciate the extensive consultation undertaken with civil society in the development of these laws.
iii. The Employment Act 2002, which gives all parents of children under the age of six the right to ask their employers for flexible working arrangements.
iv. The introduction of the Sex Discrimination (Election of Candidates) Act 2002, which assists political parties to use positive measures to reduce the inequality between numbers of men and women elected. Following elections in 2003, the number of women members in the Wales Assembly and the Scottish Parliament reached 50% and 39.5% respectively.
v. The establishment of a consultative Gender Expert Group on Trade to advise the UK Government on gender aspects of trade at UK, EU and international levels. Members of the Group represent experts from civil society and professional life, and academics.
vi. In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the promotion of equality has been built into legislation, with a statutory duty placed on each administration to promote gender equality.

While we applaud the initiatives taken, much work remains outstanding in the 12 critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action in order to improve the lives of women living in the UK. Highlighted below are some serious and major barriers that women in the UK consider must be addressed in order for their lives, and those of other women around the world, to improve.

1. Women and poverty — Changes to the Social Security system to ensure women can access appropriate benefits and earn a decent pension are crucial to lifting them out of

poverty. Some of the women most affected by poverty are lone mothers and single pensioners, primarily due to caring responsibilities, part-time employment and employment in low-paid sectors. These women often experience problems accessing the services they most need following a lifetime of gender inequality, making them vulnerable in old age.

2. Education and training of women — Women must have access to training and mentoring to empower them to take the opportunities available. The introduction of compulsory gender-awareness education in schools will help tackle gender stereotyping. Girls are still in a minority of students studying science, engineering, and information and communications technology, and subsequently enter a gender-segregated labour market where they are a minority in manual trades, engineering and the like, making it important to encourage them into non-traditional subjects and careers to reduce gender inequalities.

3. Women and health — It is critical that all women in the UK are able to exercise control and choice over their sexual and reproductive health. In Northern Ireland, the law on the practice and provision of abortion has been unclear and restrictive, meaning that many women have been forced to travel to England and pay for an abortion in a private clinic, which they might lawfully have been entitled to under the National Health Service. Sexually transmitted infections and diseases are on the increase in the UK: the sexual health message needs to begin from a positive discussion of consent. More funding is required in health education and treatment. Institutional racism and discrimination and a lack of culturally appropriate services are of concern. For instance, it is known that women are over-represented among those with mental health problems, particularly those from black and minority ethnic communities.

4. Violence against women — A comprehensive, integrated national strategy to eliminate all forms of violence against women must be developed by the Government. Current Government initiatives are fragmented, ignoring the wider issues around violence against women and focusing on specific concerns such as domestic violence, prostitution, sex trafficking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and other cultural practices which are harmful to women. No culture can justify violence against women. An integrated strategy would help protect and support women, and a significant increase in resources is badly needed.

5. Women and armed conflict — Although the UK is committed to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, funding and training is needed to implement it globally, and in Northern Ireland, in particular, peace-building initiatives are needed. The protection of women and girls against gender-based violence during and post conflict, for instance in Iraq, is paramount. Gender-awareness training and a commitment to developing monitoring processes to prevent involvement in sexual exploitation for UK military and peace-keeping missions are essential.

6. Women and the economy — Government statistics should be routinely gender disaggregated and economic indicators should include the value of unpaid work, and its significant contribution as social capital to the economy. Systematic gender impact assessments, particularly of the UK budget, must be undertaken. Targets must be set to ensure the gender pay gap, which still stands at 18%, is eradicated. Globalisation has brought an increase in the migration of labour, and with it an increase in the exploitation of women, such as those in the sex industry or as domestic workers. A strategy must be developed and resources released to ensure vulnerable girls and women are given appropriate support.

7. Women in power and decision-making — Funding of programmes and initiatives in order to achieve equal numbers of women in decision-making positions and public appointments is critical to achieving gender equality. Women's involvement at every level must be ensured.

8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women — A Single Equality Act is needed to extend to women (and indeed, all groups in society) the rights that are currently only enjoyed by a few. Achieving gender equality must not be lost in the work of the Government's proposed Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

9. Human rights of women — The UK, as part of the EU, should promote the adoption of EU-wide enforceable gender guidelines for refugees. Women and children constitute some 80% of the world's refugees, and those fleeing gender-related persecution face particular obstacles in having their asylum claims recognised. Women and girls who are trafficked and smuggled into the UK are often treated as criminals by public services. They must be given the support and advice they need, including appropriate housing and counselling.

10. Women and the media — The press must stop publishing degrading images of women, as these encourage men and boys to view women and girls as objects rather than people. The current spread and accessibility of internet porn should also be challenged as it exacerbates the exploitation of women. Internet sites regularly use underage girls and trafficked women. Women and girls are often forced to have unprotected sex and participate in 'hardcore' and dangerous sex acts, images of which are made available on the internet, resulting in women experiencing abuse, torture and psychological trauma.

11. Women and the environment — Women must be involved in planning for public services as they are the primary users. In rural areas of the UK, public transport options are limited, leading to considerable isolation for many women, particularly older women and those with mobility difficulties.

12. The girl child — Education of teenage boys and girls on sexual and reproductive health is essential, as teenage pregnancy is a significant issue in the UK, which has one of the highest rates in Western Europe. An increase in services providing advice and support

specifically designed for adolescents and young adults on sexual and reproductive health is also much needed.

Although a great deal has been achieved in the UK during the last ten years, many challenges remain, and the primary responsibility for implementing the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action rests with the Government. The UK has an active civil society which plays an important part in taking the Platform for Action forward locally, nationally and internationally. The primary concern for UK non-governmental organisations is the lack of resources allocated to implement the Platform for Action. To this end, a gender perspective should be integrated into every Government budgetary decision on policies and programmes.

The Women's National Commission hopes that the next ten years sees significant progress in commitments made in the Platform for Action in Beijing. We urge Member States to reaffirm their commitment, and work together to improve the quality of life for women and girls throughout the world. Only the establishment of enforcement mechanisms will ensure implementation of the Platform for Action and advance the situation of women in the UK.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/18

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
31 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Northern Ireland Women's European Platform, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22560 (E) 240205

Statement

The Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (the Platform) is an umbrella organisation representing over 50 affiliated organisations from the voluntary and community sectors, trade unions, statutory organisations and faith groups. The Platform aims to ensure the voice of women in Northern Ireland is heard in the debates at local, regional, national, European and international levels on the issues affecting their lives.

We welcome the opportunity offered by CSW for governments and NGOs to discuss two important thematic issues at the 49th session for the following reasons:

- to review what has been achieved through implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly;

- to identify the continuing obstacles to the advancement and empowerment of women and girls and agree on actions to tackle these.

The Platform's review of government reports on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly show that some governments have striven to achieve rapid change. Others have either been slow to take action or, worse, have regressed on their commitment to implementation.

A deep chasm is appearing between countries with regard to implementation. Without action this will continue to deepen.

In order to move forward the Platform makes the following recommendations:

1. The Platform urges **all** Member States to agree on clear time-bound targets to achieve the implementation of the Platform for Action.

2. The Platform urges **all** Member States to report achievement in the advancement of women by not just listing policy changes but also by showing evidence of outcome.

3. The Platform urges relevant Member States to also assess how implementation takes place, region by region.

4. The Platform urges **all** Member States to consult annually with the relevant NGOs on the implementation of equality of opportunity for women and report to the Division for the Advancement of Women.

5. The Platform urges CSW to identify policies by Member States that can be used as models of good practice.

6. The Platform urges **all** Member States to demonstrate through training that gender equality is essential, not only from a human rights perspective but also in order to make a positive contribution to each country's social, economic and political advancement of women and girls.

7. Given that not one country has implemented fully the 12 critical areas which were identified by the Beijing Conference in 1995, the Platform urges the CSW to strongly reinforce the need for a positive approach by **all** Member States to fully implementing the Platform for Action and the outcome document.

To move forward we must look back and the 49th Session of the CSW should aim to record what has been achieved and by which Member States, what still needs to be done and by whom, and how best this can be done within a particular time frame.

United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/19

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
31 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (c) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by National Alliance of Women's Organizations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22566 (E) 280205

Statement

NAWO, the National Alliance of Women's Organizations, is an umbrella providing representation and support for women's organisations whose headquarters are in England, and for individual supporters. NAWO seeks an end to gender inequality, and the establishment of social justice based on internationally agreed human rights instruments, for all women. NAWO works with sister organisations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in the UK Joint Committee on Women, which is the United Kingdom national co-ordination for the European Women's Lobby, where it represents the concerns and needs of all UK women.

This year, 10 years since Beijing, we celebrate the achievements of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – established in June 1946 – and the work of activists, NGOs, governments and international agencies, which have since that time worked tirelessly to create a world where equality based on access to human rights between women and men is a reality and not just a dream.

Now, after over half a century since 1946, which has included four international women's conferences focusing on equality, development and peace that have yielded many strenuously negotiated internationally agreed documents and given rise to a heightened world consciousness, we are much further along that path towards equality. But a dream it still remains.

The world over, even in an age of high technological advancement and with many working for progress and change, grave inequalities remain: discrimination against women and the girl child is still practiced in each of the Beijing Platform for Action's twelve critical areas and in new spheres not highlighted in 1995. And discrimination on additional grounds such as class, creed, ability and age further complicates efforts to build a just and peaceful world.

The Beijing Platform for Action, itself, the Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Convention on Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Security Council resolution 1325 are but a few of the international instruments underpinning the work undertaken by activists, governments, NGOs and UN agencies. They are excellent tools for the advancement of women and girls and demonstrate the important recognition that the above-mentioned challenges are real, must be faced and overcome. Further, recognition of the essential part played and to be played by civil society is another vital step forward.

At CSW, NGOs and governments alike come closest, we believe, to a shared vision of a world where equality, justice and peace are possible. CSW is an international force working towards that noble end. But there has been an unacknowledged movement on the part of some to ghettoise this Commission, corral all discussions regarding women into the sphere only of CSW and in addition, to stymie its efforts. There is no logic in restricting discussion on the needs and concerns of half the world's population on any matter to one UN forum: to do so excludes half the world's population at each meeting and in every programme. This does not mean there is no further need for specific attention, specific agencies and programmes to meet women's needs – it remains vital that the UN champions the advancement of women and girls – but what is also required is the proper recognition of the value of women as effective leaders and decision-makers, peace creators, community and family builders and shapers of development - globally. The issue of gender should be included in every national and international process.

Gender equality needs to be integral to every discussion and plan: there should be a gender audit for each process, international agreement and institutional mechanism.

In other words, gender mainstreaming properly understood to include specific women-centred activities, and long accepted as UN policy, must become a priority and be implemented throughout the UN system and by governments everywhere.

The principle of gender mainstreaming arose through the world conferences on women and there is general agreement in the literature that global, international conferences are of immense value within UN processes, but thus far there has been a lack of enthusiasm among states parties and some NGOs to engage in a further international conference on women. This is due largely to a realistic fear that some parties will use it as an opportunity to go back on already established agreements. Such opportunism is deplorable and the goal disgraceful.

Great though their achievements have been, the work of the four world conferences on women has only just started. Through these world conferences it has been possible to reach women in all walks of life in every corner of the globe and to awaken in them an awareness of the rightness of empowerment and equality and their entitlements. The Beijing Platform for Action is, for grass-roots women, the cornerstone whereby they may truly know that no person should be discriminated against on the grounds of their gender alone. The mechanisms that exist to forge this reality are not being adequately utilised but they also need to be further developed and strengthened.

NAWO and our partners and associates around the world therefore seek a conference which, rather than focussing on the one range of conferences on women and just on the Beijing Platform for Action, should assess all UN processes with respect to the achievement of gender equality goals.

There is no time to lose and no room left for vacillation. Multitudes still suffer poverty - and the majority of them are women and children. If we are to realise that dream of a better world, the advancement of women is an absolute and fundamental necessity.

We call on all states parties, NGOs, UN agencies and other stakeholders to use this important Commission on the Status of Women to insist that gender equality becomes the "bottom line", the criteria by which any process is judged valuable or successful. We call on this CSW, in the year of the first assessment of the Millennium Development Goals, when looking at gaps, implementation and emerging issues of the Beijing Platform for Action, to develop and apply sustainable and robust mechanisms to improve gender equality in all UN international agreements and processes, and call on states parties to do the same nationally.

The world over, women and men of vision are calling for women and men together to become champions of equality in action. Only when this occurs will there be true advancement for women and only then will we have created, built and shaped the world into the dream we share.